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AUTHOR Yamamoto, Kaoru
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ABSTRACT

The history of education in America reflects the dominant institutions in American society. The educational system has been dominated by institutions which education traditionally has existed to serve. Therefore, the influences of religion, the family, business, and the State have been and will continue to be evident in the classroom. (LLR)

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America In Which Children of the Middle Years Will Live: An Educational Perspective*

Kaoru Yamamoto

University of Iowa

Consensus is a difficult thing to achieve. Nevertheless, if we are asked to define the purpose of education, our answer will likely be couched in individualistic and psychological terms rather than in collective and social ones. Thus, we would prefer describing school's function as facilitating each child's self-actualization, to characterizing it as, for example, mobilization of manpower. Our own schooling saw to it that we discuss our profession only in socially desirable ways.

When we turn to people wearing different glasses, however, the answer tends to be noticeably different. Here is one coming from a sociologist on training of children.

> "The message is very simple. Like so many obvious things, it is not only fundamental but also much overlooked. The main business of socialization is the training of infants, children, adolescents (and sometimes adults) so that they can ultimately fulfill the social obligations that their society and culture will place on them."[1]

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It is often painful for us to recognize that our schools do a remarkable job of screening, homogenization, and distribution of personnel, that schools perform useful punitive and custodial functions to serve the interest of adults who may not love the young so much as they profess they do, and that some of our zeal to teach children may be based more upon our selfish, dominative needs than upon altruistic, service motives.[2] For us, understandably, the school is the central institution only through which a self-renewing society may be molded into existence.

In a wider perspective, however, it must be admitted that "the history of education in America is one of unmistakable domination by other institutions which education traditionally has existed to serve.... Therefore, as religion, the family, business, and the state successively have dominated society, their influences have been evident in the classroom."[3] These social institutions, among others, are still here and will undoubtedly continue to influence American education in the coming years. Let us, therefore, examine each one of these briefly in the hope that some extrapolation can be made from the past and present to the future.[4]

Religion

The Protestant revolt which marked the beginning of modern America represented an effort to escape the control of the organized church. In so doing, ironically, the Puritans established their own domination over the whole society. They developed and maintained a community (and a sense of community) characterized by close association, active participation, and ideological unity. Schools merely followed suit and taught children God's words. Theology, politics, and economics

were inseparable, and education was permeated with religious values.[5]

As we now know, this state of affairs did not last too long. For one thing, sectarianism forced each sect to seek protection from the domination by others in the form of the principle of the separation of church and state.

> "The first amendment to the Constitution and the various state constitutions sought to preserve the right of the people to choose between alternative religious views. The legal effect of these provisions was, and remains to this day, one of excluding sectarian teaching, but not religion itself, from the public schools. But the practical, as distinct from the merely legal, effect has been to exclude religion itself. There has never been agreement among sects sufficient to make the teaching of a common core of religious belief possible."[6]

For another, Protestant theology itself gradually changed its character under the broad influence of science, the historical and cultural relativism in cosmology, the increasingly this-worldly emphasis in modern thought, and the shift (back) in Christian ethics from personal purity to social concern. In addition to these Western trends, the pragmatic and optimistic orientation in the United States tended to facilitate secularism. Thus, it was observed of American religion that:

> "From its Puritan beginnings through its revivals to its present social and secular gospels, its whole existence and drive have been within the orbit of personal experience and behavior enacted

> within the God-given American environment. More than a sacramental, an ecclesiastical, a dogmatic-confessional, or a transcendentally directed faith, its face has been toward the actual world in which ment live and act."[7]

In our lifetime, accordingly, we have seen a peculiar separation between religion and religiosity. It is reported that church rolls now list names of two-thirds of Americans, while the proportion was only one-sixth in the 1850s. In 1957, 66.2 per cent of Americans of age 14 and above classified themselves as Protestant, 25.7 per cent as Roman Catholic, 3.2 per cent as Jewish, 1.3 per cent as believers in other religions, mere 2.7 per cent as not affiliating with any religion, and 0.9 per cent not responding. Within the past half decade, furthermore, the number of clergymen increased by more than two-thirds.[8] These figures certainly suggest the institutional strength of religion and there are some who believe that the church will continue to perform an import- and function in coming years not only as a blessed community of Christians but also as an intellectual as well as international institution. Doctrines may come and go but the institution can remain to preserve certain basic continuity.[9]

Most observers, howevever, note a decline in theological concern, or a loss of the dimension of depth, which makes such institutional religion, however prosperous it may be, rather irrelevant to the world of today.[10]

> "It (American church) is a 'religious' institution of immense power, wealth, and prestige, but one characterized largely by secular values such as recreation, sociability, and sporadic good works in the community. The social value of

> such an institution is undoubted in our mobile, rootless, suburban culture. Whether it has any real religious character - whether it manifests a presence of the holy in its midst or offers a higher ethical standard for man's daily life - is something else again."[11]

The Ultimate Concern and Teaching

Trivialization of religion and of its sacred symbols have caused much concern among theologians. Nietzsche's theme, "God is dead," is again the center of a controversy in which the fact of the experience of the absence of God, rather than that of the absence of the experience of God, is pointed out to emphasize the impossibility of responding to the classical images of the Creator and his creation and the necessity (or even desirability) to expose Christian faith to the secular and profane while waiting for the return of God.[12] Social activism and an existential emphasis upon "the ultimate concern" (after Tillich) seems to represent two of the current reactions.[13]

In these efforts to regain meaningfulness of religion, interestingly, "Many Christians are discovering that the Judaeo-Christian world view was an illusory support of their faith, while man atheists are discovering that their own convictions have the structure of a faith."[14] Self-renewal of Christianity may still be possible with "a greater modesty, a greater sense of contingency and darkness, a greater sense of comradeship with non-Christians"[15] among Christians who realize that they are, after all, a decided minority in the multitudes of men.

Where, then, does the school stand? What is the duty of teachers vis-a-vis such religious trends of tomorrow? Chances are that education is faced with a challenge to restore the true spirit of religion by raising

the basic questions that lie at the deepest level of man's existence. In this, we are obviously not concerned with any formal religion, any empty ritual patterns, or any dead symbols.

> "Religion is viewed here, not as a kind of soporific, whose task it is to put men to sleep and let them be at peace in society, but rather as the goad, the prod, which drives them constantly to see, among other things, how far the actual is from the ideal -- in themselves and in society around them. Such religion challenges man to be incapable of ease in a world that is less than perfect."[16]

It would help if schools cultivate children's social experiences so as to lead them to the discovery of religious moods. Richness of human emotion must be re-created in their own life and wisdom of the human race must be reconstructed in their own terms. In this process, they will perhaps learn what many of us have never fully recognized in our time and day. One of these ignored lessons is that it is the sin of sins to play God, to delude ourselves in believing we (armed with science and technology) are omniscient and omnipotent, and to forget our limitations and predicament inherent in human existence. Another is that the belief in God as the Creator symbolizes the insight not to worship the accomplished products of creativity in lieu of creativity itself. In other words, "What needs to be sanctified are the processes which create value, not merely the values that have thus far been experienced."[17]

The call for teachers seems rather clear. "At every level and in every subject area, from the first grade through the university, we

need teachers who are deeply committed and ultimately concerned -- teachers who are troubled by the basic human questions and who have had the courage to find their own direction."[18] The task may not be easy but the reward would be great.

> "A serious teacher must first be a serious human being. A teacher who has mastered some technical discipline is not, by virtue of that alone, worthy of being a teacher. A teacher who has nothing to communicate and nothing to transmit as a person, seems, to me, to have failed utterly in the most important aspect of his job. Without any of the formal trappings of religion at all, a school that could transform the indifference, the fearfulness, and the mental flabbiness -- which pass for objectivity -- into engagement, concern, and commitment, would be a school that does more to advance the cause of religion than any I can think of today."[19]

Image of Man, Work, and Leisure

Closely related to the subject of religion is the matter of values. Many observers have noted the decline in Protestant ethic which emphasizes will, industry, thrift, and self-denial. Such morality, it has been pointed out, was based upon individualism and the economy of privation both of which have been fast vanishing from the American scene. The emerging value patterns would seem to be geared instead to the industrialized and urbanized corporate society which demands a new kind of outlook and commitment.[20]

As the original Puritan concept of the depravity of man gradually gave way to the typical American belief in meliorism, environmentalism, and optimism concerning human nature, and as secure institutional values were slowly replaced by process-oriented instrumental values by the thrust of scientism and industrialization, our concepts of work and play have also shown some revealing changes. Rather vain efforts have been made to counteract decreasing intrinsic satisfaction in one's job (motivating factors) with an increase in extrinsic incentives such as higher wages, shorter work hours, longer paid vacation, and better recreational and working facilities (hygenic factors).[21] The end result is to compensate workers with money, time, and other amenities for their sacrifice, namely, their mechanical and insignificant work, so that they may enjoy their leisure which is their own life.

Interestingly, such interpretation of work still fits the Hebraic-Puritan values which regard work as the inescapable fate of cursed human beings forever condemned for their original sin. Although the Hellenic-Romantic interpretation of work as an inherently rewarding, play-like activity has added much to the educational emphasis upon child-centered curriculum, spontaneity and creativity, and extra-curricular activities, it has not completely swayed people's attitudes away from their inclination towards the hard-labor tradition.[22]

One aspect of this problem is the oft-mentioned fact that Americans work at play, making a serious enterprise out of their leisure activities, placing much importance upon doing (active participation) and achieving and being more proud of their accomplishments in hobbies than on the job. This seems to assuage somewhat their guilt feelings about having freedom from imperative work, that is, about having time in order to do nothing. This is a strange and painful paradox, indeed.[23]

"....Americans remain too unequivocally the children of industry, even when automation threatens to disinherit us, for us to be able to resort to leisure as a counterbalance for the deficiencies of work. Even so, leisure is coming to occupy for adults something of the position the school already occupies for youngsters, of being the institution which seems 'available' to bear the brunt of all society's derelictions in other spheres. Thus, just as schools are asked to become quasi-parental, quasi-custodial, quasi-psychiatric, and quasi-everything else, filling in for tasks other institutions leave undone or badly done, with the result that the schools often cannot do their job of education adequately; so leisure is now being required to take up the energies left untapped everywhere else in our social order, with the result that it often fails in its original task of recreation for most of us most of the time and of creativity for some of us some of the time."[24]

Thus, while the leisure is ours, the skill to use it is not. And, alas, here is another social requirement thrust upon the school to satisfy. Increasingly, schools must teach their charges to develop individual tastes and proficiency in the use of time on hand. The lesson to be taught is simply this, "No leisure time will be enough for man to experience the joys of knowledge, of art and poetry, of devotion to great human causes, of communicating with others in the dreams and anxieties of the

mind, of silently conversing with himself and silently conversing with God."[25]

In such preparatory efforts, it will be necessary to fuse our concepts of occupation (employed work) and leisure (voluntary or non-employed work) into a new concept of vocation. Vocation means purpose, commitment, and even a calling, for one's whole work life, remunerative or not, occupational or not. One works both for the fulfillment of self and for the fulfillment of others by developing all his capacities and talents, whether marketable or not, and using them in activities which are personally significant and collectively meaningful. Work must again be "love made possible" and this is the sense of vocation which we have to impart to our children.[26]

Business and Industry

Max Weber's analysis of the close association between the Protestant ethic and the values of capitalism has been well known. Interpretation of profit motives as moral virtues made a transition from the religious ideology to the commercial one easy. With the expanding business, organized labor, and rise of state systems of education in the nineteenth century,[27] inculcation of the business values gradually replaced the earlier school function of religious character formation. It is a matter of record that educational leaders supported the position of businessmen and property owners during the period of early, laissez-faire industrialism.[28]

Education for the masses drew support first from business as a long-range security in view of the growing labor unrest and later from the organized labor in face of the competition in employment. Thus, "The passage of state compulsory education laws requiring all children to

remain in school until the age of sixteen followed closely upon laws establishing the same minimum age requirement for child labor in industry; compulsory education was not instituted until children no longer were needed in the labor market."[29]

Three additional observations must be made of these child labor and compulsory attendance laws: first, the fact that the humanitarian trend at the turn of the century helped the movement to safeguard minors from mistreatment and cruelty; second, that the regulation of these matters remains in the hands of the states and not of the Federal government; and third, several observers have been urging a re-examination of these earlier legislations in view of the recent social changes.[30]

As the business ideology permeated education, many concepts and practices were borrowed from business and industry. Especially in organizational and administrative spheres, preoccupation with <u>scientific</u> management made school administrators more an efficiency expert than an educator. Teacher evaluation has often been based upon various <u>productivity</u> figures; thus, teachers whose classes register mean achievement test scores higher than national norms (which, as we should know, are not standards of performance at all) are successful; those from whose classes a number of students go to college are doing well; those who give out a higher proportion of good or poor grades than usual are suspect; those who process large classes without fuss or complaints know how to teach; or those who have published a lot are better. Similarly, schools are judged on the basis of material and numerical tangibles such as average daily attendance figures, teacher-pupil ratio, assets of physical facilities, proportion of holders of advanced degrees among the faculty, dropout rate, or efficiency of room usage.[31]

Public relations and advertising are regarded quite important and so are human relations within the school. First and foremost, teachers must fit a smoothly-running organization and children are also placed under much pressure to behave and achieve, while not being encouraged for developing their competence.[32]

Industrialization of Education

More recent and more obvious case of assimilation of business-industrial philosophy in education is the rise of a hybrid specialty called educational technology and an all-out involvement of big corporations, such as the IBM, GE, Xerox, Litton Industries, and Raytheon, in the production and sale of educational goods and services. Teaching machines, audio-visual equipment, computers, and systems approach are expected to work wonders by modernizing the educational thought and practice.[33] Instructional process, when seen as a communication problem, is expected to be stripped of its mysteries and ineptitude through systematic technical analysis and instrumentation by operationally-oriented educational engineers and efficiency-minded systems administrators who have ample funds at their disposal.[34]

Most leaders in education would appear to hail this recent development in the name of progress and admonish teachers not to be old-fashioned and irrational in their reaction.[35] It seems indeed foolhardy not to take advantage of these "labor- and time-saving objective devices"[36] and of resources in research and development, technology, and management offered by industry which is "motivated by a keen sense of social responsibility and the strong desire to render a truly significant service to the American people by providing a truly significant service to American education."[37] Nevertheless, there are doubts and objections which deserve serious consideration lest activities should become their own justification.

First, there is the matter of ultimate goals or ends of education which are, by their own admission, of little concern to scientists and engineers.[38] Educational technology chooses to start its operations from observable and measurable behavioral units assumed to be the intermediate links to any given goals. This, however, leaves open the question not only of what these goals should be but also of who specify them and how.[39]

The value neutrality claimed here is, further, more apparent than real. It cannot change the fact that science is based upon a set of assumptions the adoption of which represents quite personal choice and commitment.[40] Nor can it ignore the oft-repeated observation that certain supposed means, by their nature, restrict the attainment of appropriate goals and even become ends in themselves.[41] Thus, it has been said:

> "Institutionalization of procedures, with the help of all the gimmicks we can find, has come a long way, and I see little indication that it won't go further. The quest is for 'practices that work,' for the devices that 'have proven to be successful.' And we know what we mean by success; getting good marks in courses of study appropriate to mental ability. Our institutionalized system is complete: we even think we know what place each individual should have in society; we know to what he should aspire, and we feel outraged when a fair percentage of the students somehow don't have enough sense to act that way. But we manfully shoulder the blame because boys and girls are our

> responsibility, and then we make our diagnosis: All that's wrong with the educational machine is that it is inefficient; the problem is one of means, not ends. And the more efficient the means become, the tighter the bonds are woven; there is no longer to be room for error; and when, finally, there is no room for error there is also no room for insight and discovery."[42]

The predicament we are in becomes clearer if we think of the completion of such technological revolution in education. Assume that industrialization, so to speak, of education has been accomplished and the business of education is being run smoothly and seriously by professionals devoted to precision and efficiency. What then? What is there for schools to do other than doing what they are doing now, only faster and with less wastage? What difference would that make for teachers who already regard themselves as the dispensers of neatly packed commodities called facts or knowledge? They may sell these in larger quantities than they do now but the "professional" model of teachers (being available to offer service to needy clients), rather than the "artist" model (sharing one's own creative experience with others), will persist.[43] What is different between them and, say, salesmen? And, finally, what would there be to justify the presence of a separate social institution called school? After all, and understandably, "In defining the education market, or the knowledge market as it is sometimes called, industry views education in its broadest sense, embracing the full and ever-widening spectrum of learning situations - in the primary and secondary school classroom or on the college or university campus; in business, industry, civilian government, or the armed services."[44] Why should we

need anything over and above well-designed and skillfully-coordinated training programs within each of these institutions?

Therefore, even when the so-called technical revolution has been completed, we will find ourselves still confronted with most of the old issues which are made more critical precisely because technology has run its course and thus lost its relevance and attraction. We may then realize, certainly much too late, that instruments and values of technology can not help us go beyond technology or solve any unfinished business in education. What we need then and what we need now seem to be such human qualities as moral courage, commitment, or dedication, transcending the observable, measurable, manufacturable, or manipulable.

> "Only if we can transform the technological process from a master to a servant, harnessing our scientific inventiveness and industrial productivity to the promotion of human fulfillment, will our society be worthy of commitment. And only the vision of a world beyond technology can now inspire the commitment of whole men and women."[45]

The time to think about the world beyond technology is now and, so far as education is concerned, this task may be far more crucial than any discussion within the technological-corporational value context itself.[46]

The Family

In the Colonial days, the family occupied central place in social structure and controlled most of educational, religious, and economic functions in the community. Children were assets on the farm and many

families were, therefore, unwilling to give them up to public education when the latter increased its demands in mid-nineteenth century. Industrialization exacted further tolls in family autonomy by turning the flow of population back from farms to cities, taking fathers away from home, assigning wives to strictly housekeeping and child-rearing roles, and making liabilities out of children. However, due to the continuing emphasis on technical sophistication, and due also to social stratification consonant with the new corporate structure, children were soon to regain their importance as agents of family prestige and mobility.[47] Their central position in the family is strengthened by the fact that now, in the absence of many other social functions, "sexual relations, childbearing, and child rearing have proportionately a much larger place in total family life than they once had,"[48] that American parents seem to have become increasingly more permissive, psychology-conscious, and child-centered,[49] and that success or failure as parents is largely judged on the basis of children's performance.[50]

Nevertheless, it is not easy to be a child in the world today and tomorrow. Evidently, he is under considerable stress, being required to serve many masters at one and the same time.[51] The child is to learn both to "get along with" others and to "get ahead of" others ("bureaucratic" and "entrepreneurial" orientations, respectively[52]). He is to help compensate for all the frustration, anxiety, and humiliation which his father suffers outside in the dehumanized, industrial world, and which his mother experiences in playing the confusing roles of the American female.[53] Living in an urban enclave or in suburban homogeneity, he is expected to learn to make social adaptations with little cross-group experience. He is to learn proper sex, vocational, and life roles

when these are not clearly defined and where no adequate models are available.[54] He is encouraged to grow, yes, but grow into what kind of world? A world in which no human significance is felt, no humility is left, and no escape is seen from either the desperate population explosion or the threat of thermonuclear annihilation? Why should they grow at all, especially when they are not recognized as full-share participants in spite of having all their future at stake?[55]

Schools to the Rescue

Nowadays, schools are supposed to be capable of solving any social issues and the present one is no exception. The school is now perceived as an institution in which the young are prepared for the radical transition from the private world of home and family, personal emotions and private symbols, to the public world of the great social superstructures, impersonal rationality and corporate symbols. The transformation of the child is obviously not a matter of degree (more of the same) but rather one of kind (different types of morality). We may or may not agree with the following statement but, in any case, this is the issue involved.

> "In short, part of the price of being an American is being an organization man .... The important question is not whether, but what kind of organization man?"[56]

Let us, for the present purposes, classify social systems along the dimensions of (1) reference locus (external vs. internal) and (2) role type (instrumental vs. consummatory). It will then be noted that, within the family, children develop a certain degree of autonomy first (a move from an externally-determined motivational system to a more internal one) and next learn proper sex roles (differentiation along the instru-

mental-consummatory axis). Moreover, this sequential pattern is repeated at successively higher levels of social organization.[57]

Thus, at the primary school level, pupils are confronted with a common set of task expectations and a common scale of evaluation. As a result, they distribute themselves hierarchically along the dimension of achievement, some complying with the external evaluative pressure better than others. Achievers are identified as <u>good</u> pupils and given status and encouragement. Unfortunately, in this early process, we may set a self-fulfilling prophecy in motion for <u>poor</u> ones and, worse yet, may stamp the sense of competence out of children's mind.[58] The secondary school, on the other hand, is more concerned with a role-type differentiation between those who would be oriented toward scholarly pursuit and those who would lean toward interpersonal relations. A leading crowd interested in athletic prowess and popularity is obviously clearly separated from those minority who are academically committed.[59]

At a still higher level, colleges recycle the process by differentiating among students according to a narrower definition of achievement, thus sending the strongly achievement-oriented ones to the next level of formal training while distributing the rest among the military, business, government, industry, etc. Finally at the graduate level, a further sifting is done in terms of the instrumental-consummatory role types. The results are the familiar distinction between "non-person-directed" and "person-directed" specialties,[60] between researchers and teachers (or administrators), or between performers and dramatizers.[61]

In this manner, we have traditionally followed a spiral process of screening, training, and distribution by differentiating students first on the reference locus and next on the role type. Whether such a sequence serves our future needs is moot in view of the changing

social structure. It must be also recognized that, while the instrumental (technological) and consummatory (expressive) orientations will continue to appeal to different groups of people, the crucial question for education is how to create "an awareness that they share a common fate,"[62] how to develop a sense of "historical identification"[63] among all human beings. Unless we can nurture a larger sense of "we-ness" through the recognition of a "common predicament" facing all of us, all palliative efforts to solve intergroup conflicts across sex, age, ehtnic, religious, national, or other divisive lines are doomed to failure.[64] Can and would schools teach this fundamental wisdom?

The State

"Because our government is a representative one, Americans have tended to seek political solutions for social problems. When tasks are not accomplished by private action, we delegate them to the public sector, to be taken care of by public action."[65] Within the past quarter century, governmental involvement in areas long considered outside the direct scope of the state has become increasingly heavier. Today, the proportion of government employees in the total labor force is more than fifteen per cent while it was less than three per cent a century ago. Whereas thirty-one per cent of the national income go to Federal, state, and local taxes now, the percentage was fourteen a century ago. At the turn of the century, the Federal government received less than twenty per cent of all taxes collected, while the fraction has grown to seventy-five per cent.

Along this general trend, education has been interpreted more and more in terms of the interests of the state and of the national manpower strategy in the current international crisis. Many a decision in education is made on "the assumption that public school's primary responsi-

bility is to train citizens who are useful to their country, just as certainly as an earlier goal was to train religious zealots useful to the church. Precisely as education has come to play a more important function in the economy, it has become more strategically involved in politics."[66] Schools are increasingly regarded as the principal agents of change for implementing public policies derived through political processes.[67] If we base our prediction upon historical trends, this phenomenon will persist for some time to come.

Several questions arise here. The first is whether any single social institution can perform as numerous functions as those now required of schools. Conservation of social order and transmission of cultural heritage are themselves difficult tasks to accomplish in the fast-changing world. A sense of continuity and identity is indeed hard to find now precisely when we need it to keep us sane and mindful of the interdependence of human fate. At the same time, moreover, schools are expected to formulate strategies and tactics for social change, to <u>sell</u> these novel ideas for tomorrow to the public of today, to provide trained personnel for execution of these plans, and to serve as a custodial and remedial institution for those who cannot quite make it. Can they really perform all these functions?

Ironically, if schools are to succeed in satisfying all the requirements, they would be forced to dissolve themselves in the community which they, as an entity, promised to serve.

> "The changes in our intellectual institutions that will work themselves out over the next thirty-three years (till 2000) are not merely modifications within existing organizations....,

> but more fundamental developments that will generate new and transform old institutional forms. ....As a result, a variety of new organizational forms linked more closely to community needs, to work, and to living currents of industrial-politicial-intellectual life than to the traditional community of scholars will be developed within, outside, and beside the campus."[68]

Such de-institutionalization of schools will undoubtedly be stimulated by the massive efforts expended by the Federal government (Peace Corps, Job Corps, Teacher Corps, etc.), the military, and the business-industry.[69] Nevertheless, it must be seriously questioned whether the desired results are obtainable in any approaches in which the familiar institutional form and its control are left intact.[70] It is also debatable whether education based upon strictly national goals is at all defensible in view of the world-wide values necessary to build a viable and just international order.[71]

Epilogue

This, then, was a one' man's review of what has been, is, and will be in our society and schools. While neither representative nor exhaustive, it depicted some of the challenges education is destined to face in coming decades. Although the trends observed were arbitrarily classified according to the four major institutional forces which have influenced American education in the past, namely, religion, the family, business, and the state, it is obvious that they are all interrelated and complex. May awareness of these issues result in keener discussion and wiser decisions on specific problems within education itself, such as the one being considered at this conference. Let me add one cautionary note. We know that schools, their structure, curriculum, and function, will change because, more than anything else, change is our Zeitgeist. It is automatically good to try out new ways and things; not to change is heretical. On the other hand, it is a fact that many fads and fashions have come and gone without affecting children a bit. Changes may be desirable but, if they are made for their own sake, they may be far less than useful.

Consider for the moment, an admittedly speculative but highly heuristic observation of a scholar.

> "The constancy of the school's accomplishment
> is one of those things that everybody knows.
> It is part of the folklore that, in educational
> investigations, one method turns out to be as
> good as another and that promising innovations

produce about as much growth as the procedures they supplant, but no more. ....The relative constancy in the achievements of the schools, ..., should be no surprise to anyone who believed in the theory of spontaneous schooling. According to this theory, the mechanisms actually responsible for academic growth reside in humble, spontaneous tendencies which are always in operation when an adult consorts with maturing children. True enough, such tendencies should be freer to operate in some circumstances than in others. But the conditions essential for effective operation would not necessarily reflect the differences in administrative arrangements. Many of these primitive forces might function just as well in large classes as in small, with one formal method as with another, in a primitive one-room school as in the latest architectural triumph. ....If this theory should be true, we would be making a great mistake in regarding the management of schools as similar to the process of constructing a building or operating a factory. In these latter processes, deliberate decisions play a crucial part, and the enterprise advances or stands still in proportion to the amount of deliberate effort exerted. If we must use a metaphor or model in seeking to understand the process of schooling, we should look to agriculture rather than to the factory. In agriculture we do

not start from scratch, and we do not direct our efforts to inert and passive materials. We start, on the contrary, with a complex and ancient process, and we organize our efforts around what seeds, plants, and insects are likely to do anyway. Through an improved understanding of these organiz processes we can almost revolutionize the output, but we do not supplant or ignore these older organic forces. We always work through them. Such a metaphor, such a view, would invite a somewhat relaxed attitude toward education once the basic forces are set in motion. The crop, once planted, may undergo some development even while the farmer sleeps or loafs. No matter what he does, <u>some</u> aspects of the outcome will remain constant."[72]

Are we really concerned about the core educational problems of America in which children of the middle years live?

Notes

1
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